

Message Text

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16

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2142

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 5963

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IR

SUBJECT: IRANIAN ELECTIONS-NEW FACES 1975

REFS:(A) TEHRAN 5703;(B) TEHRAN 5029

SUMMARY: WITH FINAL RESULTS NOT YET IN, SOME THREE-FOURTHS OF DEPUTIES AND SENATORS ELECTED ON JUNE 20 ARE NEW TO PARLIAMENT. VOTING TURNOUT WAS MASSIVE-PROBABLY BETWEEN FOUR AND SIX MILLION VOTERS. MANY PEOPLE VOTED FOR FIRST TIME IN THEIR LIVES, RESPONDING TO HEAVY GOI PUBLICITY WHICH URGED THEM TO SHOW UNSPECIFIED FOREIGN CRITICS THAT IRANIANS WERE UNITED IN SUPPORTING RESURGENCE PARTY. NO VIOLENCE WAS REPORTED. VOTERS WROTE NAMES ON CANDIDATES ON BLANK PAPER OR UTILIZED REPRODUCED LISTS GIVEN THEM BEFOREHAND. ILLITERATES HAD HELP IN WRITING NAMES OF THEIR CANDIDATES. CONTRARY TO IMPRESSION THAT THESE PROCEDURES WOULD HELP INCUMBENTS, TEHRAN RESULTS SHOW MANY PEOPLE VOTED FOR ONLY A FEW OUT OF MANY CANDIDATES LISTED AND IN OTHER POLLING RESULTS OFTEN WENT AGAINST INCUMBENTS. ALTHOUGH BALLOT COUNTING ITSELF APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN FAIR, SOME BALLOT-STUFFING WAS UNCOVERED. SOME CRITICS OF REGIME HAVE COMPLAINED THAT ELECTION WAS HASTILY ORGANIZED WITHOUT LEGAL BASIS AND CHARGED THAT WIDESPREAD PRESSURE WAS EXERTED TO ACHIEVE LARGE TOTAL OF REGISTRANTS

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AND VOTERS. PRE-SELECTION OF CANDIDATES HAD REMOVED MUCH

OF UNCERTAINTY ABOUT RESULTS. AMOUZEGAR DEFENDED THIS PROCEDURE AS NECESSARY TO INSURE REPRESENTATION OF WORKERS, GUILDS, PROFESSIONALS AND WOMEN SO THAT PARLIAMENT WOULD BE BALANCED FORUM FOR DISCUSSION OF ALL NATIONAL ISSUES. GOAL WAS ACHIEVED WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT DISSENT AND MOST IRANIANS SEEM TO HAVE ENJOYED THE SHOW. END SUMMARY

1. JUNE 20 ELECTION WAS MOST UNUSUAL OF IRAN'S HISTORY. FOR FIRST TIME IT WAS CARRIED OUT BY SINGLE PARTY, WHICH LED TO FOCUS ON PERSONALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS OF CANDIDATES RATHER THAN ON NATIONAL ISSUES. GOI CARRIED ON STRONG PUBLICITY AND PRESSURE CAMPAIGN TO OBTAIN LARGE NUMBER OF REGISTRANTS(TEHRAN 5703), AND VOTING TURNOUT WAS ALSO MASSIVE DESPITE POPULAR REALIZATION THAT GOI HAD NO WAY OF CHECKING TO SEE WHETHER THOSE WHO REGISTERED VOTED. MANY PEOPLE VOTED WHO HAD NEVER GONE TO POLLS BEFORE. MEDIA TOOK LINE THAT VOTING WAS A PATRIOTIC DUTY AND URGED IRANIANS TO SHOW FOREIGN CRITICS OF REGIME AND RESURGENCE PARTY THAT THEY WERE BEHIND SHAH'S PARTY. MINISTER OF INTERIOR JAMSHID AMOUZEGAR ATTACKED BBC FOR STATING THAT ONLY 40 PERCENT OF THOSE ELIGIBLE HAD VOTED. HE CLAIMED FIGURE WAS 6.8 MILLION, OR ABOUT 52 PERCENT OF 13 MILLION ELIGIBLE VOTERS, BUT HE WAS CLEARLY REFERRING TO NUMBER OF PEOPLE REGISTERED TO VOTE, AS HE MADE THE COMMENT ON ELECTION DAY BEFORE VOTES WERE COUNTED. (THERE HAD BEEN SOME CONFUSION ON THIS POINT EARLIER BECAUSE PAPERS HAD CLAIMED 12 MILLION REGISTRANTS. THIS TOTAL WAS NEARLY DOUBLE THE ACTUAL NUMBER BECAUSE SEPARATE REGISTRATION CARDS WERE ISSUED TO EACH VOTER ELIGIBLE TO TAKE PART IN BALLOTING FOR BOTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND SENATE--VOTING AGE IS ONLY 20 FOR FORMER BUT 25 FOR LATTER.)

2. THERE WERE NO PRINTED BALLOTS. VOTERS WERE URGED TO PREPARE LISTS OF SENATORS AND DEPUTIES FOR WHOM THEY WANTED TO VOTE AND BRING THEM TO POLLS. MIMIOGRAPHED LISTS WERE ACCEPTABLE SO LONG AS THEY WERE NOT DISTRIBUTED WITHIN POLLING PLACES. ILLITERATE VOTERS WERE ASSISTED BY BOY SCOUTS, SCHOOL CHILDREN OR BYSTANDERS WHO WROTE CANDIDATES' NAMES FOR THEM AND FREQUENTLY GAVE ADVICE ON CHOICES TO THOSE WHO ASKED FOR IT. ALTHOUGH COALITIONS OF CANDIDATES WERE NOT WIDESPREAD, SOME DID FORM AND PRODUCED POSTERS URGING PEOPLE TO VOTE FOR THEM AS A BLOC. THEY ALSO PREPARED VOTING LISTS WHICH COULD BE DROPPED IN AS BALLOTS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXISTENCE OF BLOCS OF VOTES SUCH AS UNITED BUS COMPANY WORKERS, MUNICIPALITY EMPLOYEES, AND WORKERS IN LARGE FACTORIES WERE IMPORTANT FACTORS IN TEHRAN VOTE.

3. CONTROLS ON BALLOTING WERE CAREFULLY SUPERVISED TO ATTEMPT TO AVOID BALLOT-STUFFING. NINE PEOPLE OBSERVED PROCEDURES AT EACH OF TEHRAN'S THOUSAND POLLING PLACES. ELECTORAL CARDS WERE COUNTED AND CONTROLLED AGAINST TOTAL NUMBER OF BALLOTS, WHICH RESULTED

IN INVALIDATION OF RESULTS AT SEVERAL LOCATIONS IN TEHRAN.
CHECKS TO SEE WHETHER REGISTRANTS ACTUALLY VOTED WOULD BE VERY
DIFFICULT TO MAKE BECAUSE VOTING COULD BE DONE ANYWHERE, REGARDLESS
OF WHERE VOTER HAD REGISTERED. SOME OBSERVERS PROPOSED A PRECINCT
SYSTEM FOR NEXT ELECTIONS TO GIVE VOTERS BETTER IDEA OF
CANDIDATES FROM THEIR AREA. NOT MENTIONED WAS FACT THAT SUCH A
SYSTEM WOULD ALSO PERMIT BETTER CHECKING ON WHO VOTED.
HELMS

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 TEHRAN 5963

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4. VOTING PROCEDURES OUTLINED ABOVE WOULD APPEAR TO FAVOR
INCUMBENTS, BUT SUCH WAS NOT THE RESULT. ONLY HALF OF APPROVED
CANDIDATES WERE INCUMBENTS AND LESS THAN HALF OF THOSE WON. IN
CITIES VOTERS HAD MANY CANDIDATES TO CHOOSE FROM AND APPARENTLY
DECIDED EITHER TO FAVOR NEW FACE OR VOTED FOR LESSER-KNOWN LOCAL
CANDIDATES WHOSE PLATFORMS THEY LIKED. IN OTHER AREAS LOCAL
ISSUES WERE PARAMOUNT, AND MANY MEMBERS OF MIDDLE CLASS WERE
ELECTED. FORMER PARTY LABELS PLAYED LITTLE ROLE: EX-MARDOM
SEC GEN FAZAEI LOST, WHEREAS UNSUCCESSFUL MARDOM CANDIDATE IN
SHAHSAVAR WON OVER EX-IRAN NOVIN DEPUTY KHALATBARY WHO HAD BEATEN

HIM IN BY-ELECTIONS OF LAST SEPTEMBER(TEHRAN 8462 OF 1974).
FORMER PAN IRAN PARTY LEADER MOHSEN PEZESHPUR WON IN KHORRAMSHAHR
DESPITE OPPONENTS' CHARGES HE WAS NOT REALLY FROM CITY AND ALSO
HAD BEEN OUT OF MAJLES SINCE 1971. (ONE UNSUCCESSFUL OPPONENT
WAS THE INCUMBENT.)

5 .MOST SOPHISTICATED VOTERS SAW ELECTIONS MORE AS EFFORT TO
SHOW SUPPORT FOR SHAH'S RESURGENCE PARTY THAN AS SERIOUS EFFORT
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TO INVOLVE CITIZENS MEANINGFULLY IN POLITICAL PROCESS, ALTHOUGH
EVEN THEY WERE IMPRESSED BY HEAVY TURNOUT OF VOTERS. AFTER ALL,
PARLIAMENT PLAYS LIMITED ROLE IN IRAN. CRITICS OF SHAH'S REGIME
PRIVATELY BELITTLED ELECTION AS ILLEGALLY CONSTITUTED AND AS
POPULARITY CONTEST WITHOUT REAL ISSUES. ONE NATONALIST TOLD
EMBOFF HE PLANNED TO FILE FROMAL PROTEST IN COURTS STATING
ELECTION CONTRAVENED CONSTITUTION. ENOUGH YOUTHS EXPRESSED
RESENTMENT AT BEING EXCLUDED BY AGE LIMITS THAT AMOUZEGAR
PUBLICLY CAME OUT IN FAVOR OF LOWERING VOTING AGE TO 18 FOR
BOTH SENATE AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

6. 1975 ELECTION BEARS SOME RESEMBLANCE TO 1963 ELECTION WHEN
HASSAN ALI MANSUR'S PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY BROUGHT INTO PARLIAMENT
MANY NEW FACES, SUCH AS LAND REFORM OFFICIALS AND OTHER PROVINCIAL
OFFICEHOLDERS WHO ENLISTED EARLY ON AS SOLDIERS IN SHAH'S FIGHT TO
IMPLEMENT HIS "WHITE REVOLUTION." FAILURE OF HALF OF PARLIAMENT
INCUMBENTS TO BE RENOMINATED IN LATE MAY WAS SIGN THAT REGIME
AGAIN WANTED NEW BLOOD INFUSED TO HELP NATON IMPLEMENT SHAH-
PEOPLE REVOLUTION, AND ELECTORATE CARRIED THAT PROCESS FURTHER
BY VOTING OUT MANY INCUMBENTS. AMOUZEGAR FREELY ADMITTED
TO NEWSMEN THAT IN THIS YEAR'S ELECTION CANDIDATES APPROVED BY
RESURGENCE PARTY REPRESENTED SPECIFIC INTEREST GROUPS(WORKERS
20 PERCENT, GUILDS AND PROFESSIONALS 21 PERCENT, DOCTORS, LAWYERS
AND ENGINEERS 28 PERCENT, AND WOMEN 16 PERCENT, ETC.) SO THAT
PARLIAMENT WOULD BE BALANCED FORUM WHERE ISSUES WOULD BE DEBATED
BY REPRESENTATIVES OF EVERY SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP. THAT GOAL
HAS BEEN REACHED WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT DISSENT AND MOST IRANIANS
SEEM TO HAVE ENJOYED THE SHOW.
HELMS

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